



Epi Data Brief

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

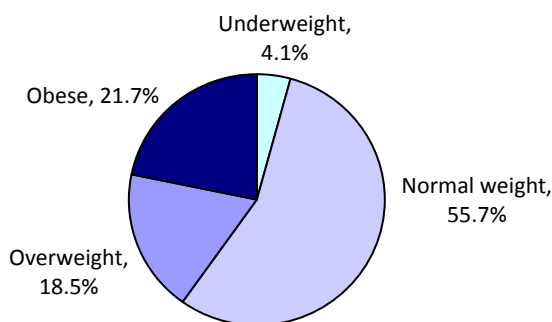
October 2010, No. 1

Childhood Overweight, Physical Activity and “Screen-time” in New York City

Overweight among NYC public school children¹

- Overall, four in ten NYC public school students aged six to 12 were overweight (including obese) in 2009-2010 (40%).

Weight among NYC public school children, aged six to 12



Source: NYC FITNESSGRAM 2009-2010

Underweight is defined as body mass index (BMI) <5th percentile, normal weight as 5th ≤ BMI ≤ 85th, overweight as 85th < BMI < 95th and obese as BMI ≥ 95th percentile.

- Rates of overweight among NYC public school children appear to be stable between school years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010.
- Hispanics have the highest prevalence of overweight (46%), followed by blacks (40%). Whites (34%) and Asians (32%) are less likely to be overweight.
- Overall, girls are less likely to be overweight than boys (38% vs. 43%).
- The gender gap is widest among Asians (37% among boys vs. 25% among girls). Among blacks the gap is reversed, with girls slightly more likely to be overweight than boys (41% vs. 39%).
- Children living in the Bronx have the highest prevalence of overweight (42% vs. 38% in Manhattan and 40% in Queens, Brooklyn and Staten Island).

Parents' perceptions of overweight in their children²

- According to parent reports, fewer than one in five (18%) New York City children aged six to 12 years are slightly or very overweight – less than half the prevalence among public school children of the same age (40%).
- Similar to prevalence findings among public school children, Hispanics are more likely to be perceived as overweight by a parent (25%) than white (14%) and black (15%) children.

Beyond the Data

Issues discussed in this Brief were highlighted in the October 2010 press release “[More NYC Children are Overweight than Parents Recognize.](#)”

Data Sources

¹NYC FITNESSGRAM 2009-2010:

The Health Department and the Department of Education use **NYC FITNESSGRAM** to measure public school children's weight and height, as well as their fitness. Data presented here are from a sample of 450,155 students measured during the 2009-2010 school year and weighted to represent all public school children aged six to 12 in kindergarten through eighth grade. Body mass index (BMI) – computed from a person's weight and height – can be used to identify people who may have higher health risks due to excess weight. Among children, weight categories are defined by comparing BMI to a standard population developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/bmi). In this report, “overweight” is used to describe children either overweight or obese, except in the pie chart.

²Child Health Survey 2009:

The **Child Health Survey** is a population-based telephone survey conducted in 2009 by the Health Department with support from the Children's Health Fund. A parent, guardian or other knowledgeable adult (referred to as “parents”) was interviewed about the health of one child in the selected household for a total sample of 3,002 children. Survey data are weighted to the NYC population of children from birth to 12 years using the 2006-2008 American Community Survey (PUMS). All estimates presented here are limited to children aged six to 12 years.

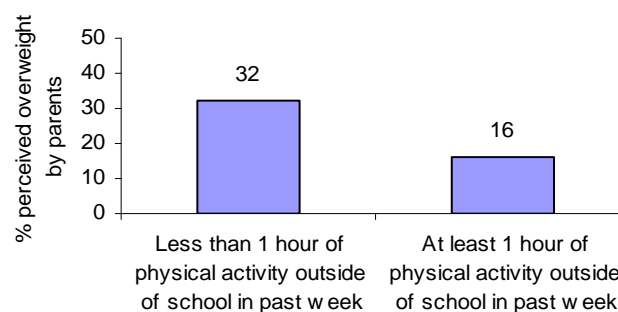


- Few school-aged children (13%) had a health care provider tell their parent in the past year that they were overweight. Nearly one in five children (18%) with a provider-mention of overweight was *not* perceived as overweight by their parents.

Physical activity outside of school among NYC children, according to parents²

- According to parents, four in ten NYC children aged six to 12 years (40%) met recommendations of at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day in the past week, not including PE or recess at school.
- One in ten children (11%) did less than one hour of physical activity in the past week outside of school.
- Children with at least one hour of physical activity outside of school in the past week are less likely to be perceived as overweight by their parents than those with less than one hour (16% vs. 32%).

Parent-perceived overweight by physical activity



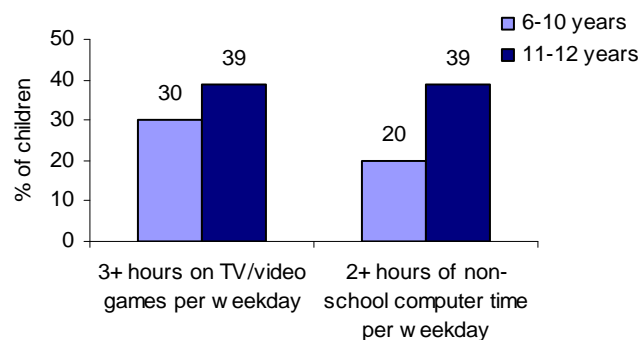
Source: Child Health Survey 2009

- Black children were more likely to meet physical activity recommendations in the past week than white, Hispanic and Asian children (51% vs. 41%, 32% and 30%, respectively).

Screen-time: TV/video games and non-school computer time, according to parents²

- One third of NYC children (33%) aged six to 12 years spend three or more hours watching TV or playing video games on an average weekday, according to parent reports.
- Children who spend three or more hours on TV or video games per weekday are more likely to be perceived as overweight by their parents than those who watch less (25% vs. 15%).
- One quarter of children (25%) aged six to 12 years use a computer for purposes other than schoolwork for two or more hours on an average weekday, according to parent reports.

Screen-time by age



Source: Child Health Survey 2009

- Children with less than one hour per weekday of non-school computer time are less likely to be perceived as overweight by their parents than those who use it more (15% vs. 20%).
- Older children (11-12 years) are more likely to spend three or more hours on TV/video games per weekday than younger children (6-10 years) (39% vs. 30%) and are twice as likely to spend two or more hours on the computer for non-schoolwork (39% vs. 20%).

MORE New York City Health Data and Publications

- For complete tables of data presented in this Brief, visit nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/epi/datatable1.pdf
 - Visit EpiQuery – the Health Department’s online, interactive health data system at nyc.gov/health/EpiQuery
- My Community’s Health: Data and Statistics at nyc.gov/health/nycommunityshealth**